

THE ROYAL SAVIOR

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*“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,
for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”
Acts 5:31*

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same verse is #1301, “A Prince and a Saviour.”]

THIS was part of the answer of Peter and the other apostles to the question and declaration of the high priest, “Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” Then Peter and the other apostles replied, “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree,” and in the verse following our text, they claimed to be witness-bearers for the risen and reigning Prince and Savior, and more than that, they declared that they were co-witnesses with “the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

These apostles were the representatives of Messiah the Prince, acting under His authority, and so far as they could, filling up the gap caused by His absence. They asserted that their preaching and teaching had been done by divine command, which could not be set aside by any human authority, imperial or ecclesiastical, and that the true Prince of Israel, the Son of David, alone had the power and the right to issue commissions to those who owned allegiance to JEHOVAH. They declared that Jesus, whom the chief priests had crucified, was still alive reigning in Glory, enthroned at the right hand of God, and that they were only fulfilling His royal commands when they were “standing in the temple, and teaching the people.”

Moreover, when the apostles stated that, in addition to being a Prince, Jesus was also a Savior, and that He had been exalted with His Father’s right hand in order that He might “give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,” they gave the very best reason in the world for their preaching, for they were all engaged in preaching that sinners should repent, and in assuring those who did repent that their sins were forgiven for Christ’s sake.

I cannot conceive of any better argument than this, which the apostles used when answering the high priest—“You command us not to teach in Christ’s name; but the command of the Son of God, our Prince and Saviour, is ‘that repentance and remission of sins [See sermons #329, Christ’s First and Last Subject, #1729, “Beginning at Jerusalem,” and #3224, “Repentance and Remission”] should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,’ so, as ‘we ought to obey God rather than men,’ we have filled Jerusalem with *his* doctrine, and we mean to go on preaching repentance and remission until, as far as we are able, we have filled the whole world with this doctrine.”

That purpose of Christ was, at least in part, fulfilled by the apostles in their day. God did give repentance and remission of sins to a chosen remnant of Israel, and when the rest of the Jews rejected the testimony of Christ’s servants, they said, as Paul and Barnabas did to the Jews at Antioch, “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

We must never forget, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, that we owe the first preaching of the Gospel to the Jews. They were, in all lands that were then known, the heralds of Christ, publishing the

royal proclamation far and wide. Under the old dispensation, “unto them were committed the oracles of God,” and the Gospel of the new covenant was in the first instance entrusted to them, and it was through the Jews that it was made known unto us Gentiles. Let us remember this fact as we contemplate the glorious future both of Jews and Gentiles.

Israel as a nation will yet acknowledge her blessed Prince and Savior. During many centuries the chosen people, who were of old so highly favored above all other nations on the face of the earth, have been scattered and peeled, oppressed and persecuted, until sometimes it seemed as if they must be utterly destroyed, yet they shall be restored to their own land which again shall be a land flowing with milk and honey. Then, when their hearts are turned to Messiah the Prince, and they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn over their sin in so long rejecting Him, the fullness of the Gentiles shall also come, and Jew and Gentile alike shall rejoice in Christ their Savior.

In taking such a text as this, I think it is always right to give first the actual meaning of the passage before using it in any other way. This I have already done by showing you what I suppose the apostles meant in replying as they did to the high priest, now let us try to gather other truths from this passage.

I. First, let us learn that ALL WHO RIGHTLY RECEIVE CHRIST RECEIVE HIM BOTH AS PRINCE AND SAVIOR.

He is exalted this day for many purposes—as a reward for all the pangs He endured upon the cross, as our covenant Head and Representative, and that He may rule over all things for the good of His church, as Joseph ruled over Egypt for the good of his brethren. Christ is exalted as a pledge of our exaltation, for “we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

But our text declares that *God has exalted Jesus that He may be to His own chosen people a Prince and a Savior*—not that He may be a Prince only, or a Savior only, but that He may be both a Prince and a Savior. He is a Prince, to receive royal honors; a Prince, to be the Leader and Commander of His people; a Prince, whose every word is to be instantly and implicitly obeyed, a Prince, before whom we who love Him will gladly bow, even as in Joseph’s dream, his brothers’ sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf, and as they themselves afterwards “bowed themselves to him to the earth” when he became a great lord in Egypt.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a Prince among men, a Prince in His church, and a Prince in the highest heavens, indeed, He is more than a Prince as we understand that word, for He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” But He is also a Savior to be trusted, a Savior to be accepted with our whole heart, a Savior who exactly meets our need, for we feel that we need to be saved, we recognize our inability to save ourselves, and we perceive in Him the ability, the grace, the power, and everything else that is required in order to save us. So He is a Savior to be trusted and accepted as well as a Prince to be obeyed and honored.

Let us never imitate *those who talk of Christ as a Prince, but will not accept Him as a Savior*. There are some who speak respectfully of Christ as a great Leader among men, a most enlightened Teacher, and a holy Man whose life was perfectly consistent with His teaching so that He can be safely followed as an Exemplar, He is their Prince, but that is all. We cannot occupy such a position as that, if we were to say that Christ is our Prince but not our Savior, we should have robbed Him of that honor which is, perhaps, dearer to Him than any other. It was not simply to reign over the sons of men that He came from heaven to earth, He had legions of nobler spirits than those that dwell in bodies of clay, every one of whom would gladly fly at His command to obey His behests.

Besides, if He had pleased to do so, He had the power to create unnumbered myriads of holy beings who would have counted it their highest honor to be subservient to His will. Mere dominion is not what Christ craved, from of old His delights were with the sons of men because He had covenanted with His Father that He would save them. Therefore was He called Jesus, because He came to save His people from their sins. In order to accomplish that great purpose, it was necessary for Him to take upon Himself our nature, and to live a life of perfect obedience to His Father’s will, and at last to die a shameful death

upon the cross that He might offer the one sacrifice for sins forever that alone could bring salvation to all who believe in Him. We never read that Jesus said to His disciples, “I am longing for the hour when I shall take the reins of government into My hand, and wear upon My head the crown of universal sovereignty,” but we do read that He said to them, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it is accomplished.”

We never read that He said to the Jews, “I am come to rein over you,” on the contrary, when men would have taken Him by force and made Him a king, He hid Himself from them. He was a King, but not a man-made king, and His rule was to be a contrast to that of every other monarch. Christ’s own description of His mission was, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” I think that our royal Savior puts the saving before the ruling, and if I call Him Prince, and deny Him the title of Savior, He will not thank me for such maimed and mutilated honors. No, God exalted Him to be a Prince and a Savior, and we must receive Him in both characters, or not at all.

For, mark you, *we cannot really receive Christ as Prince unless we also receive Him as Savior*. If we say that we accept Him as our Prince, but reject Him as our Savior, is there not merely disloyalty, but treason of the deepest dye in that rejection? This gracious Prince tells me that I am lost and undone, and bids me trust Him to save me, if I practically tell Him that I do not need Him to save me—and I do that by rejecting Him—I virtually say that He came from heaven to earth on an unnecessary errand, at least as far as I am concerned.

If I do not put my trust in His expiatory sacrifice, I say, in effect, that His death upon Calvary was a superfluity, that He foolishly threw away His valuable life in needless self-sacrifice, but that would be rank blasphemy. If I reject Christ as Savior, I do by that very act reject Him as Prince. It is sheer mockery for me to say, “I honor Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews [See sermons #1353, Ecce Rex, and #3123, “The King of the Jews”], but I refuse to be washed from my sin and uncleanness in the fountain filled with His blood, I am willing to accept the man Christ Jesus as my Exemplar, and I will try, as far as I can, to follow His steps, but I will not accept pardon at His hands.”

If I talk like that, Christ is neither my Prince nor my Savior, but I am His enemy, and unless I repent, and bow before Him in real homage, and accept Him both as Prince and Savior, He will at the last condemn me with the rest of His enemies who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” You may extol Him with your tongue, but the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart would be far more prized by Him than all your empty praises.

It is a higher eulogium to Christ to stoop to kiss His pierced feet, and find in His wounds perfect healing for all the wounds that sin has made, than to pronounce the most fulsome panegyrics upon His spotless character. He wants not the meaningless flatteries of men, but He thirsts for the trustfulness of souls that are willing to be saved by Him. This is the best refreshment He can ever have, as He told His disciples when He had won to Himself the soul of that poor fallen woman at Sychar, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

There are *some who seem willing to accept Christ as Savior who will not receive Him as Lord*. They will not often state the case quite as plainly as that, but as actions speak more plainly than words, that is what their conduct practically says. How sad it is that some talk about their faith in Christ, yet their faith is not proved by their works! Some even speak as if they understood what we mean by the covenant of grace, yet alas! there is no good evidence of grace in their lives, but very clear proof of sin (not grace) abounding. I cannot conceive it possible for anyone truly to receive Christ as Savior and yet not to receive Him as Lord.

One of the first instincts of a redeemed soul is to fall at the feet of the Savior, and gratefully and adoringly to cry, “Blessed Master, bought with Your precious blood, I own that I am Yours—Yours only, Yours wholly, Yours forever. Lord, what will You have me to do?” A man who is really saved by grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligations to serve Christ, the new life within him tells him *that*. Instead of regarding it as a burden, he gladly surrenders himself—body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord who has redeemed him, reckoning this to be his reasonable service. Speaking for

myself, I can truthfully say that, the moment I knew that Christ was my Savior, I was ready to say to Him—

*“I am Thine and Thine alone,
This I gladly, fully own;
And in all my works and ways,
Only now would seek Thy praise.*

*Help me to confess Thy name,
Bear with joy Thy cross and shame,
Only seek to follow Thee,
Though reproach my portion be.”*

It is not possible for us to accept Christ as our Savior unless He also becomes our King, for a very large part of salvation consists in our being saved from sin’s dominion over us, and the only way in which we can be delivered from the mastery of Satan is by becoming subject to the mastery of Christ. The “strong man armed” cannot keep us under his cruel sway when the stronger One overcomes him and sets us at liberty.

In order that we may be rescued from this power of the prince of darkness, the Prince of light and life and peace must come into our soul, and He must expel the intruder, and take His rightful place as our Lord and Master, guarding by His own power what He has saved by His own right hand and His holy arm. If it were possible for sin to be forgiven, and yet for the sinner to live just as he lived before, he would not really be saved. He might be saved from some part of the punishment due to sin, but he would still be a most wretched man, for if there were other punishment for sin than the slavery and tyranny of sin’s own self, that would be punishment enough to make a man’s life utterly miserable, like the poor wretch chained to a corpse, and compelled to drag it about with him wherever he went.

Let a man once know what sin really is, and he needs nothing else to make him thoroughly unhappy. I was talking, only today, with a Christian brother about our crosses, and I said that I thanked God we were not left without a cross to carry. “Ah!” my friend replied, “but there is one cross we would gladly throw away if we could, and that is the heaviest cross of all—the body of sin and death that is such a burden to us.”

Yes, that is indeed a grievous burden to true Christians. That is the iron that enters into our very soul. That is the gall of bitterness, the deadly venom of the old dragon’s teeth, and therefore, brethren and sisters in Christ, we do not really receive Christ as our Savior unless we also receive Him as Prince, but when He comes to reign and rule in our mortal bodies, the tyranny of the usurper is broken, and we know Jesus as the complete Savior of our body, soul, and spirit. He would not be our Prince if He were not our Savior, and He would not be our Savior if He were not our Prince, but what a blessed combination these two offices make!

The man who is taught of God to understand this great truth will be a wise teacher of others. I believe that many errors in doctrine arise through lack of a clear apprehension of Christ’s various relationships towards His spiritual Israel. To some, Christ is only a Prince, so they have a sort of lifeless legality. Others live in Antinomian licentiousness because Christ is not the Prince and Lord of their lives. But beloved, he who receives Christ both as Prince and Savior has the blessed and happy experience of resigning his own will and subjecting all the passions of his soul to the sacred control of his glorious Prince, and at the same time he daily realizes in his soul the cleansing power of the precious blood of Jesus, and so, as Mary sang, his spirit rejoices in God his Savior.

This also is the true Christian practice as well as the Christian doctrine and experience—to be ever “looking unto Jesus” as my Savior, feeling that I always want Him in that capacity, and that I shall need Him to save me even to my last moment on earth, yet also looking up to Him as my Prince, seeking to be obedient to Him in all things as far as I can learn His will from His Word, and by the teaching of His Holy Spirit, and to conform my whole life to the royal and divine commands that He has issued for my

guidance. I have not the time to enlarge upon this truth, but it seems to me that there is a practical lesson to be learned from the fact that all who rightly receive Christ receive Him both as Prince and Savior.

There are preachers who preach mere morality. I trust their number is smaller than it used to be, but there are still too many professedly Christian ministers who are like that notable man who said that he preached morality till there was no morality left in the place. Yet afterwards, when he imitated Paul, and preached Christ crucified, he soon found that vice hid her dishonored head, and that all the graces and virtues flourished under the shadow of the cross.

So have we found it, and therefore, whoever may preach anything else, we shall still stick to the old-fashioned theme that Paul preached, that old, old story which the seeker after novelties condemns as stale, but which, to the man who wants eternal life, and longs for something that will satisfy his conscience and satiate his heart, has a freshness and charm which the lapse of years only intensifies, but does not remove.

II. The second lesson we learn from our text is that REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS ARE BOTH NEEDED BY THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE SAVED.

Those needs are clearly indicated by Christ's offices as Prince and Savior, inasmuch as He is a Prince, we must repent of our rebellion against Him, and inasmuch as He is a Savior, He is exalted with His Father's right hand to give us remission of sins as well as repentance, and we must have both these blessings if we are to be saved.

First, *we cannot be saved without repentance*. No remission of sin can be given without repentance, the two things are so joined together by God, as they are in our text, that they cannot be separated. Many mistakes are made as to what true evangelical repentance really is. Just now, some professedly Christian teachers are misleading many by saying that "repentance is only a change of mind." It is true that the original word does convey the idea of a change of mind, but the whole teaching of Scripture concerning the repentance which is not to be repented of is that it is a much more radical and complete change than is implied by our common phrase about changing one's mind.

The repentance that does not include sincere sorrow for sin is not the saving grace that is wrought by the Holy Spirit. God-given repentance makes men grieve in their inmost souls over the sin they have committed, and works in them a gracious hatred of evil in every shape and form. We cannot find a better definition of repentance than the one many of us learned at our mother's knee—

*"Repentance is to leave
The sin we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more."*

I am always afraid of a dry-eyed repentance, and mark you, if forgiveness could be granted to those who were not sorry for their sin, such forgiveness would tend to aid and abet sin, and would be no better than the Romish heresy that, when you have sinned, all you have to do is to confess it to a priest, pay a certain sum of money according to the regular Roman tariff, and start over again on your career of evil. God forbid that we should ever fall into that snare of the devil!

If I could keep on living in sin, and loving it as much as I ever did, and yet have remission of it, the accusation of the blasphemer that Christ is the minister of sin would be a just one, but it is not so. On the contrary, we must loathe sin, and leave sin, and have an agonizing desire to be clean delivered from it, otherwise we can never expect the righteous God to say to us, "Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven."

Besides, if remission of sins could be obtained without repentance, the sinner would be left very much as he was before, indeed, he would be in a worse condition than he was in before. If God *could* say to him, "I forgive you," and yet he remained unrepentant, unregenerated, unconverted, he would still be an enemy of God, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be.” Forgiveness would only make such a man a more impudent, hardened, self-righteous enemy of God than he was before. If there is not such a thorough Spirit-wrought change in him that he flings away his weapons of rebellion, and casts himself penitently at the feet of his offended Sovereign, I fail to see in what sense we can call him a saved man. No, repentance is the absolutely necessary prelude to remission.

On the other hand, *we cannot be saved without the remission of our sins following upon our redemption*. God exalted Jesus “with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Note that “repentance” and “forgiveness of sins” are separate and distinct gifts of the exalted Christ. Our repentance does not entitle us to claim from God the pardon of our sin apart from His gracious promise to give it to us.

If I get into a man’s debt, and then feel sorry that I owe him so much money, that regret will not pay my debt. If I transgress the law of the land, and when I stand in the dock say how grieved I am that I have broken the law, my sorrow will not pay the penalty that I have incurred. The magistrate or judge, in passing sentence upon me, may remit a portion of it because of my contrition, but I have no right to claim even that clemency on his part, and before God, my sorrow for my sins gives me no claim upon Him for the remission of them. No, I must say to Him, as Toplady so truly sings—

*“Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

*Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone.”*

Suppose I do now hate some sin that I once loved, or that I hate all sin, no credit is due to me, for that abhorrence of sin is what I ought always to have had. God had the right to claim from me the hatred of sin of every sort, but that hatred does not discharge the debt which I owe to God.

I will go further than that, and say that no one ever repents of sin so thoroughly as he does when he knows that it is forgiven. Hence when Christians begin their new life, they do not repent once, and then leave off repenting, but repentance and faith go hand in hand with them all the way to heaven. Indeed, dear old Rowland Hill used almost to regret that in heaven he might not still have the tear of penitence glistening in his eye, but of course, that is not possible, for of the redeemed in glory it is expressly declared that, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

III. Thirdly, and very briefly, BOTH REPENTANCE AND REMISSION ARE GIFTS FROM CHRIST. God has exalted Him “to give repentance...and forgiveness of sins.”

The same Lord who gives the remission also gives the repentance. This is wrought in us by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, yet it is not HE who repents, He cannot do so, and He has nothing of which He needs to repent, but *we* repent, and though it must always be our own act, yet it is Jesu’s gift to us, and the Spirit’s work in us. Jesus bestows this gift upon us in His capacity as Savior, and we never truly repent until we recognize Jesus as our Savior, and put our whole trust in His atoning sacrifice.

Smitten by the cross, our rocky heart is broken, and the streams of penitential tears gush forth even as the water leaped from the rock smitten by the rod of Moses in the wilderness. When Jesus grants the grace of forgiveness, at the same moment He gives the tender heart that mourns that it should have needed forgiveness. I believe that if this truth were thoroughly understood, it would help many more to receive the Calvinistic system of theology which now puzzles them. I know that when I first realized

that my repentance was the gift of God, the whole doctrine of salvation by grace fell into my soul as by a lightning flash.

The other side of the truth is that *the same Lord who gives the repentance also gives the remission*. No one will dispute the fact that the forgiveness of sins is the free gift of the exalted Savior. This priceless blessing could never be purchased by us, or deserved by us on account of our feelings, promises, doings, or anything else, it is a gift—freely, wholly, absolutely a gift of God’s grace.

It is given *with* repentance, but not given *for* or because of repentance, and wherever remission of sin is given, it works in the soul more and more repentance of sin, but it is, in itself, a gift independent of repentance, yet given with it, a royal gift from the royal Savior exalted with His Father’s right hand. So what you have to do, dear friends, is to look to Christ, and to Christ alone, to give you penitence while you are impenitent, and to give you pardon when you are penitent. So, as Hart sings—

*“Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
God’s free bounty glorify;
True belief, and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy.*

*Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit’s rising beam.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 10

Verse 1. *Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

They had hunted Paul from city to city, but the only feeling for them that he had was a wish that they might be saved. Such a wish as that should be in the heart of every Christian, his desire for his bitterest enemy should be that he may be saved.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

We should always give people credit for every good thing that there is in them, it will often enable us all the better to point out other matters in which they are deficient. So Paul put it on record, concerning the Jews of his time, that they had a zeal for God, though it was not a zeal “according to knowledge.”

3. *For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.* [See sermons #1899, Zealous, But Wrong, and #2214, Barriers Broken Down].

They were so busy trying to work out a righteousness of their own that they had never accepted the righteousness which God is prepared to freely give to all those who will receive it at His hands.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* [See sermon #1325, Christ the End of the Law].

This is the very essence of the Gospel, that believing in Christ brings to sinners a righteousness which they can never obtain in any other way.

5-6. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith—*

Is of quite another sort, for it—

6-9. *Speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* [See sermon #1898, Mouth and Heart].

Oh, what a blessedly simple plan of salvation is here revealed! “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” The apostle says this plan of salvation is so near to men that it is in their mouth. When anything is in your mouth, how can you make it your own? Why, by swallowing it, and so near is the Gospel to every man that he has, as it were, but to drink it down to make it his very own. It is not up there on the lofty heights, nor down there in the depths of the abyss, but it is here, and wherever else Christ is preached, and wherever His Word is read. O sinner, the Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart,” then put it not away from you, but hold it fast forever!

10. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* [See sermons #519, Believing with the Heart, #520, Confession with the Mouth, and #3011, Faith First, Confession Following].

After believing in Christ, the man must confess that he does believe in Him. It would be a shame for any believer to try to sneak into heaven without owning that Christ has saved him. If any man is ashamed of his religion, you may depend upon it that it is one of which he has cause to be ashamed, but he who has true saving faith in his heart should never blush to own it. What is there to blush about in being a Christian? Let those blush who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

11-12. *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Whoever they may be, Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, black or white, if they will but call upon God in prayer, He will not be miserly towards them, but He will be generous towards them in the abundance of the blessings which He will give them in answer to their cry.

13-14. *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

They cannot rightly pray without faith, “for he that cometh to God must believe ‘that he is, and that he is’ a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

14. *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

Those who do not hear the Gospel are not likely to believe it, and there are many unbelievers who never seek to hear it, and it is always wrong for a man to refuse to believe any truth before he knows what it really is. There should at least be a sincere searching of the Holy Scriptures, and a candid listening to the preaching of the Word, before it is rejected.

14-15. *And how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* [See sermon #2327, The Whole Machinery of Salvation].

The Gospel brings gladness wherever it comes. The Word which we preach tells of joys that will last forever. The Gospel shall make the whole world ring with new music when it is received by all, and it shall roll away the mists that now swathe this poor dusky planet, and make it shine out like its sister stars in all the glory of God when once Christ is fully acknowledged here as Lord and Savior.

16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.* [See sermon #2804, Disobedience to the Gospel].

All who have heard the Gospel have not obeyed it.

16. *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

And what Isaiah said is what we also have to say today, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”

17. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* [See sermon #1031, How Can I Obtain Faith?].

Salvation comes by faith, and faith comes by hearing, but that hearing must be the hearing of the Word of God. Surely there is no great difficulty in understanding the Gospel. This is no maze in which a man may lose himself. Here are no puzzling directions which only the learned can comprehend, oh, no! but here stand the plain, simple, soul-quickenings words, “Believe and live.”

18-20. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

Is not that a wonderful text? There are some who have heard the Gospel year after year, and who have refused it, and perished, and there are, on the other hand, scattered up and down this world, thousands of people who have never yet heard it, but the very first time they do hear it, they will accept it, and be eternally saved.

21. *But to Israel—*

To God’s ancient people, to whom the Gospel had been preached when Paul wrote this epistle, “to Israel”—

21. *He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

It is strange that many, who first hear the Word, and oftenest hear it, turn away from it, while others, to whom it comes as a complete novelty, are blessed the first time they hear it. I sometimes say that there are some hearers, who regularly occupy these seats, who are just like pieces of india-rubber. They are easily impressed, they yield ascent to every truth that is uttered, but they soon get back into their old shape again, and they are exactly the same, after twenty years of hearing the Gospel, as they were before, only that they are still more hardened.

On the other hand, there will sometimes drop into this house of prayer a thoroughly irreligious man, with a heart as hard as a flint, but the very first tap of the hammer of the Gospel breaks the flint so effectually that it is never a flint again, and God’s grace renews his heart there and then. It is our earnest desire, on all occasions, whatever hearers are gathered here, that God’s saving power may be manifested to all present. So may it be now, for Christ’s sake, and to God’s glory! Amen.

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